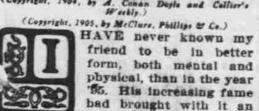
## HE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES,

By A. Conan Doyle > Illustrated by F. D. Steele

## Black Peter

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immense practice, and I should be guilty of an indiscretion if I were even to bint at the identity of some of the illustrious clients who crossed our humble threshold in Baker give us some short sketches of the es- him. He was pinned like a beetle on a floor." street. Holmes, however, like all great artists, lived for his art's sake, and, save in the case of the Duke of Holdernesse, I have seldom known him claim any large reward for his inestimable services. So unworldly was he-or so capricious-that he frequently refused his belp to the powerful and wealthy where the problem made no appeal to his sympathies, while he would devote weeks of most intense application to he affairs of some humble client whose be presented those strange and dratic qualities which appealed to his magination and challenged his inge-

In this memorable year '95 a curious and incongruous succession of cases nad engaged bis attention, ranging rom his famous investigation of the sudden death of Cardinal Tosca-an nquiry which was carried out by him it the express desire of his holiness the pope-down to his arrest of Wilson, the otorious canary trainer, which removed a plague spot from the east end of London. Close on the beels of these wo famous cases came the tragedy of Woodman's Lee and the very obscure ircumstances which surrounded the leath of Captain Peter Carey. No record of the doings of Mr. Sherlock Tolmes would be complete which did not include some account of this very musual affair

During the first week of July my riend had been absent so often and so ong from our lodgings that I knew he and something on hand. The fact that everal rough looking men called durng that time and inquired for Captain Basil made me understand that Holmes vas working somewhere under one of he numerous disguises and names with which he concealed his own formilable identity. He had at least five mall refuges in different parts of andon in which he was able to hange his personality. He said nothng of his business to me, and it was not my habit to force a confidence. The first positive sign which he gave ne of the direction which his investication was taking was an extraordinary one. He had gone out before reakfast, and I had sat down to nine when he strode into the room, is bat upon his head and a huge parb headed spear tucked like an umorella under his arm.

"Good gracious, Holmes," I cried, 'you don't mean to say that you have been walking about London with that

"I drove to the butcher's and back." "The butcher's?"

"And I return with an excellent apetite. There can be no question, my lear Watson, of the value of exercise before breakfast. But I am prepared o bet that you will not guess the form hat my exercise has taken." "I will not attempt it." chuckled as he poured out the cof-

"If you could have looked into Al ardyce's back shop you would have seen a dead pig swung from a hook in he ceiling and a gentleman in his shirt sleeves furiously stabbing at it with this weapon. I was that energetic person, and I have satisfied myself that by no exertion of my strength blow. Perhaps you would care to

"Not for worlds. But why were you

floing this?" "Because it seemed to me to have an indirect bearing upon the mystery of Woodman's Lee. Ah, Hopkins, I got your wire last night, and I have been expecting you. Come and join us." Our visitor was an exceedingly alert man, thirty years of age, dressed in a quiet tweed suit, but retaining the erect bearing of one who was accustomed to official uniform. I recognized him at once as Stanley Hopkins, a young police inspector, for whose future Holmes had high hopes, while he turn professed the admiration and Spect of a pupil for the scientific methods of the famous amateur. Hop-

kins' brow was clouded, and he sat down with an air of deep dejection. "No, thank you, sir. I breakfasted in town, for I came up yesterday to re-

"And what had you to report?" "Fallure, sir; absolute fallure."

"You have made no progress?" "None." "Dear me! I must have a look at

the matter." "I wish to heavens that you would, Mr. Holmes. It's my first big chance, and I am at my wits' end. For goodness' sake, come down and lend me a

"Well, well, it just happens that I have already read all the available evidence, including the report of the inquest, with some care. By the way, what do

on the scene of the crime? Is there no my head into that little house. It was modifies any views which I may have manage it. What would be do?"

Hopkins looked surprised. of sealskin-and he was an old sealer."

"But he had no pipe."

"No doubt. I only mention it beshould have been inclined to make that his face twisted like a lost soul in torthe starting point of my investigation. ment, and his great brindled beard lens, However, my friend, Dr. Watson, stuck upward in his agony. Right knows nothing of this matter, and I through his broad breast a steel har- here," said he. should be none the worse for hearing poon had been driven, and it had sunk the sequence of events once more. Just deep into the wood of the wall behind you that I picked the book off the sentials."

Stanley Hopkins drew a slip of paper | had been so from the lustant that he | low?" from his pocket.

"I have a few dates here which will give you the career of the dead man, plied them. Before I permitted any-Captain Peter Carey. He was born in thing to be moved I examined most committed. most during and successful seal and the floor of the room. There were no whale fisher. In 1883 he commanded footmarks." the steam sealer Sea Unicorn of Dundee. He had then had several successful voyages in succession, and in the none." following year, 1884, he retired. After that he traveled for some years, and gated many crimes, but I have never finally he bought a small place called yet seen one which was committed by Woodman's Lee, near Forest Row, in a flying creature. As long as the crim-Sussex. There he has lived for six Inal remains upon two legs so long years, and there he died just a week must there be some indentation, some ago today.

"There were some most singular gloomy fellow. His household consist- trace which could have sided us. I uned of his wife, his daughter, aged derstand, however, from the inquest These last were continually changing, failed to overlook?" for it was never a cheery situation, and sometimes it became past all bearing. companion's ironical comments. The man was an intermittent drunkard, and when he had the fit on him he time, Mr. Holmes. However, that's was a perfect fiend. He has been past praying for now. Yes, there were known to drive his wife and daughter several objects in the room which callout of doors in the middle of the night ed for special attention. One was the and flog them through the park until harpoon with which the deed was comthe whole village outside the gates mitted. It had been snatched down

was aroused by their screams. age assault upon the old vicar, who cant place for the third. On the stock had called upon him to remonstrate was engraved 'Ss. Sea Unicorn, Dunwith him upon his conduct. In short, dee. This seemed to establish that the Mr. Holmes, you would go far before crime had been done you found a more dangerous man than fury and that the murderer had seized Peter Carey, and I have heard that the first weapon which came in his he bore the same character when he way. The fact that the crime was comcommanded his ship. He was known mitted at 2 in the morning, and yet Pein the trade as Black Peter, and the ter Carey was fully dressed, suggested name was given him not only on act that he had an appointment with the count of his swarthy features and the murderer, which is borne out by the color of his huge beard, but for the fact that a bottle of rum and two dirty humors which were the terror of all giasses stood upon the table." around him. I need not say that he "Yes," said Holmes, "I think that heard one single word of sorrow about room?" his terrible end

here has not heard of it. He had built a wooden outhouse-he always called from his house, and it was here that let us hear some more about the objects he slept every night. It was a little single roomed but 16 by 10. He kept case." the key in his pocket, made his own bed, cleaned it himself and allowed no other foot to cross the threshold. There are small windows on each side, which were covered by curtains and never opened. One of these windows was turned toward the highroad, and Inside were 'P. C.' on the flap. There when the light burned in it at night the folk used to point it out to each bacco in it." other and wonder what Black Peter was doing in there. That's the window, Mr. Holmes, which gave us one of the few bits of positive evidence side was rough and worn, the leaves that came out at the inquest.

"You remember that a stonemason ten the initials "J. H. N." and the date named Slater, walking from Forest Row about 1 o'clock in the morning examined it in his minute way, while two days before the murder, stopped Hopkins and I gazed over each shoulas he passed the grounds and looked fer. On the second page were the an I transfix the pig with a single at the square of light still shining printed letters "C. P. R." and then among the trees. He swears that the came several sheets of numbers. Anshadow of a man's head turned side- other heading was "Argentine." anothwars was clearly visible on the blind or "Costa Rica" and another "San and that this shadow was certainly Paulo," each with pages of signs and not that of Peter Carey, whom he figures after it. knew well. It was that of a bearded man, but the beard was short and ed Holmes. bristled forward in a way very dif- "They appear to be lists of Stock he says, but he had been two hours in 'J. H. N.' were the initials of a broker the public house, and it is some dis- and that 'C. P. R.' may have been his upon his face. tance from the road to the window. client." Besides, this refers to the Monday, and the crime was done upon the Wednes- Holmes.

"On the Tuesday Peter Carey was in one of his blackest moods, flushed with | clinched hand, drink and as savage as a dangerous wild beast. He roamed about the house, and the women ran for it when 'J. H. N.' are the only initials we have About 2 o'clock the following morning find no one in 1883, either in the house a very poor burglar." before I came round. I spent the night his daughter, who slept with her win- or among the outside brokers, whose usual thing for him to bawl and shout tant one that I hold. You will admit, day evening." when he was in drink, so no notice Mr. Holmes, that there is a possibility was taken. On rising at 7 one of the that these initials are those of the sec- lage, perhaps," I suggested. maids noticed that the door of the but ond person who was present-in other was open, but so great was the terror words, of the murderer. I would also which the man caused that it was mid- urge that the introduction into the case less try to force their way into the Through the gauze curtain our eyes day before any one would venture of a document relating to large masses cabin. What do you think of it, Mr. down to see what had become of him. of valuable securities gives us for the Holmes?" Peeping into the open door, they saw first time some indication of a motive a sight which sent them flying with for the crime." white faces into the village. Within an hour I was on the spot and had he was thoroughly taken aback by this again?"

His initials were inside it. And it was called it a cabin, and a cabin it was, any of the securities here mentioned?" deed, he smoked very little, and yet he maps and charts, a picture of the Sea It in a captain's room. And there, in shares.' cause if I had been handling the case I | the middle of it, was the man bimself-

had uttered that last vell of agony. "I know your methods, sir, and I ap-45-fifty years of age. He was a carefully the ground outside and also

"Meaning that you saw none?" "I assure you, sir, that there were

"My good Hopkins, I have investiabrasion, some triffing displacement which can be detected by the scientific points about the man. In ordinary searcher. It is incredible that this life he was a strict Puritan-a silent, blood bespattered room contained no twenty, and two female servants. that there were some objects which you

The young inspector winced at my

"I was a fool not to call you in at the from a rack on the wall. Two others "He was summoned once for a sav- remained there, and there was a va-

was loathed and avoided by every one both inferences are permissible. Was of his neighbors and that I have not there any other spirit than rum in the

"Yes, there was a tantalus contain-"You must have read in the account ing brandy and whisky on the sea of the inquest about the man's cabin, chest. It is of no importance to us, Mr. Holmes, but perhaps your friend however, since the decanters were full, and it had therefore not been used." "For all that, its presence has some

it the 'cabin'-a few hundred yards significance," said Holmes. "However, which do seem to you to bear upon the

"There was this tobacco pouch upon the table."

"What part of the table?" "It lay in the middle. It was of coarse sealskin-the straight haired skin, with a leather thong to bind it. was half an ounce of strong ship's to-

"Excellent! What more?" Stanley Hopkins drew from his pocket a drab covered notebook. The outdiscolored. On the first page were writ-"1883." Holmes laid it on the table and

"What do you make of these?" ask-

ferent from that of the captain. So Exchange securities. I thought that

"Try Canadian Pacific railway," said

Stanley Hopkins swore between his

"What a fool I have been!" he cried. "Of course it is as you say. Then window.

Sherlock Holmes' face showed that

and bluebottles, and the floor and walls crime in which I can find no place for useful tool." "It was the man's own pouch, sir. were like a slaughter house. He had this. Have you endeavored to trace

sure enough, for you would have "Inquiries are now being made at him. Meanwhile let me see the inside the candle end upon the table and dis- hut. thought that you were in a ship. There the offices, but I fear that the com- of the cabin." "No, sir, we could find no pipe. In- was a bunk at one end, a sea chest, plete register of the stockholders of these South American concerns is in might have kept some tobacco for his Unicorn, a line of logbooks on a shelf. South America and that some weeks little room still stood as it had been ed a line upon the shelves. Leaning on was due to return from the arctic seas all exactly as one would expect to find must clapse before we can trace the on the night of the crime. For two the table, he rapidly turned over the at the very time when my father was

"Yes, sir; it is a blood stain. I told

"Surely there is some discoloration

card. Of course be was quite dead and "Was the blood stain above or be-

> "On the side next the boards." "Which proves, of course, that the book was dropped after the crime was

"Exactly, Mr. Holmes, I appreciated

that point, and I conjectured that it was dropped by the murderer in his hurried flight. It lay near the door." "I suppose that none of these securi. This visit in the night." ties have been found among the property of the dead man?"

"No. sir." "Have you any reason to suspect rob-"No, sir. Nothing seemed to have

been touched." "Dear me, it is certainly a very interesting case. Then there was a knife, was there not?"

"A sheath knife, still in its sheath. It lay at the feet of the dead man. Mrs. Carey has identified it as being ber husband's property." Holmes was lost in thought for some

"Well," said he at last, "I suppose I shall have to come out and have a look

Stanley Hopkins gave a cry of joy. "Thank you, sir. That will, indeed, be a weight off my mind."

Holmes shook his finger at the in "It would have been an easier task a

week ago," said he. "But even now my visit may not be entirely fruitless. Watson, if you can spare the time I ould be very glad of your company. If you will call a four wheeler, Hopkins, we shall be ready to start for Forest Row in a quarter of an hour." Alighting at the small wayside sta-

tion, we drove for some miles through the remains of widespread woods which were once part of that great forest which for so long held the Saxon invaders at bay-the impenetrable weald, for sixty years the bulwark of Britain. Vast sections of it have been cleared, for this is the seat of the first iron works of the country, and the trees have been felled to smelt the ore. Now the richer fields of the north have absorbed the trade, and nothing save these ravaged groves and great scars in the earth shows the work of the past. Here, in a clearing upon the green slope of a hill, stood a long, low stone house, approached by a curving drive running through the fields. Nearer the road and surrounded on three sides by bushes was a small outhouse, one window and the door facing in our direction. It was the scene of the murder.

Stanley Hopkins led us first to the house, where he introduced us to a haggard, gray haired woman, the widow of the murdered man, whose gaunt and deep lined face, with the furtive look of terror in the depths of her red rimmed eyes, told of the years of hardship and Ill usage which she had endured. With her was her daughter, a pale, fair hairher father was dead and that she blessed the hand which had struck him Black Peter Carey had made for himself, and it was with a sense of relief that we found ourselves in the sunlight again, making our way along a path which had been worn across the fields by the feet of the dead man.

The outhouse was the simplest of awellings, wooden walled, shingle roofed, one window beside the door and one on the farther side. Stanley Hopkins drew the key from his pocket and had stooped to the lock when he paused with a look of attention and surprise

"Some one has been tampering with it." he said.

There could be no doubt of the fact. The woodwork was cut, and the teeth and struck his thigh with his scratches showed white through the paint, as if they had been that instant done. Holmes had been examining the

"Some one has tried to force this they heard him coming. Late in the to solve. I have already examined the also. Whoever it was has failed to evening he went down to his own hut. old Stock Exchange lists, and I can make his way in. He must have been

"This is a most extraordinary thing." dow open, heard a most fearful yell initials correspond with these. Yet I said the inspector. "I could swear from that direction, but it was no un- feel that the clew is the most impor- that these marks were not here yester-

"Some curious person from the vil-

"I think that fortune is very kind to "You mean that the person will come

droning like a harmonium with the files formed. I had come to a theory of the "Come again next night with a more man, in Norfolk jacket and knicker. trace them, and at last, after many

removed, but the furniture within the book, one of the logbooks which form- been in command of a whaler which Holmes had been examining the cov- Holmes examined every object in turn, the entry which he sought. Then, with that year was a stormy one, and there er of the notebook with his magnifying but his face showed that his quest was an angry gesture of his clinched hand, was a long succession of southerly not a successful one. Once only he paused in his patient investigation. "Have you taken anything off this

shelf Honkins?"

"No; I have moved nothing." "Something has been taken. There is book lying on its side. It may have | cowering in the grasp of the detective, | them and that he had no view to perbeen a box. Well, well, I can do noth- He sank down upon the sea chest and sonal profif when he took them, ing more. Let us walk in these beau looked helplessly from one of us to "I came down to Sussex with the intiful woods, Watson, and give a few the other. hours to the birds and the flowers. We shall meet you here later. Hopkins, 'Who are you and what do leath occurred. I rend at the inquest and see if we can come to closer quarters with the gentleman who has paid

It was past f1 o'clock when we formed our little ambuscade. Hopkins was for leaving the door of the but open. but Holmes was of the opinion that this would rouse the suspicions of the stranger. The lock was a perfectly simple one, and only a strong blade was needed to push it back. Holmes also suggested that we should wait, not fuside the hut, but outside it among the bushes which grew round the farther window. In this way we should be able to watch our man if he struck a light and see what his object was in this stealthy nocturnal visit.

It was a long and melancholy vigil, and yet brought with it something of the thrill which the hunter feels when I The young man winced.

The Adventure of you make of that tobacco pouch found my word that I got a shake when I put which did not appear at the inquest, very small penknife. He could not terming, and he was shaking in every man't. You can imagine our amazement of the crime? Is there no my head into that little house. It was modifies any views which I may have manage it. What would be do?" limb. He was dressed like a gentle. ment. I spent months in trying to bockers, with a cloth cap upon his doubtings and difficulties, I discovered "So I should say. It will be our head. We watched him staring round that the original seller had been Capfault if we are not there to receive with frightened eyes. Then he laid tain Peter Carey, the owner of this appeared from our view into one of "Naturally, I made some inquiries The traces of the tragedy had been the corners. He returned with a large about the man. I found that he had hours with most intense concentration leaves of this volume until he came to crossing to Norway. The autumn of he closed the book, replaced it in the gales. My father's yacht may well corner and put out the light. He had have been blown to the north and there hardly turned to leave the but when met by Captain Peter Carey's ship. If Hopkins' hatel was on the fellow's col- that were so, what had become of my lar, and I heard his loud gasp of ter- father? In any case, if I could prove ror as he understood that he was taken. from Peter Carey's evidence how these less dust in this corner of the shelf The candle was relit, and there was securities came on the market it would than elsewhere. It may have been a pur wretched captive, shivering and be a proof that my father had not sold

son want here?"

"You are detectives, I suppose," said month of August, 1883, on board the he. "You imagine I am connected with Sea Unicorn I might settle the mystery the death of Captain Peter Carey. I of my father's fate. I tried last night

assure you that I am innocent." "We'll see about that," said Hop- ble to open the door. Tonight I tried kins. "First of all, what is your again and succeeded, but I find that the

name? "It is John Hopley Nellgan." I saw Holmes and Hopkins exchange a quick glance.

"What are you doing here?" "Can I speak confidentially?" "No, certainly not."

"If you have no answer, it may go badly with you at the trial."

"Why should I tell you?"



ed girl, whose eyes blazed defiantly at he lies beside the water pool and waits us as she told us that she was glad that for the coming of the thirsty beast of prey. What savage creature was it which might steal upon us out of the down. It was a terrible household that darkness? Was it a fierce tiger of crime, which could only be taken fighting hard with flashing fang and claw, or would it prove to be some skulking jackal, dangerous only to the weak and

unguarded? In absolute silence we crouched among the bushes, waiting for whatever might come. At first the steps of a few belated villagers or the sound of voices from the village lightened our vigil, but one by one these interruptions lied away and an absolute stillness fell moon us, save for the chimes of the distant church, which told us of the progress of the night, and for the rustle and whisper of a tine rain falling amid the

foliage which roofed us in. Half past 2 had chimed, and it was the darkest hour which precedes the dawn, when we all started as a low but sharp click came from the direction of the gate. Some one had entered the drive. Again there was a long silence, and I had begun to fear that it was a false alarm, when a stealthy step was heard upon the other side of the hut, and a moment later a metallic scraping and clinking. The man was trying to force the lock. This time his skill was greater or his tool was better, for there was a sudden snap and the creak of the hinges. Then a match was struck, "Very unlikely. Few of them would and next instant the steady light from dare to set foot in the grounds, far a candle filled the interior of the but. were all riveted upon the scene within.

pallor of his face. He could not have friend, however, who is a business been much above twenty years of age, man, and it was he who discovered

"THEN HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THAT?" "Well, I will tell you," he said. think of this old scandal gaining &

> of Dawson & Neligan? "I could see from Hopkins' face that be never had, but Holmes was keenly interested.

new lease of life. Did you ever hear

"You mean the west country bankrs," said he. "They failed for a milion, ruined half the county families of Cornwall and Nellgan disappeared."

"Exactly. Neligan was my father." At last we were getting something 'Inspector Stanley Hopkins, 46 Lord positive, and yet it seemed a long gap between an absconding banker and Captain Peter Carcy planed against the wall with one of his own harpoons. We all listened intently to the young man's words.
"It was my father who was really

was only ten years of age at the time, but I was old enough to feel the shame and horror of it all. It has always been said that my father stole all the fast which Mrs. Hudson had prepared. securities and fled. It is not true. It The young detective was in high spirwas his belief if he were given time in which to realize them all would be well and every creditor paid in full. He started in his little yacht for Norway just before the warrant was issued for his arrest. I can remember that last night, when he bade farewell to my mother. He left us a list of the securities he was taking, and he swore that he would come back with his honor cleared and that none who had trusted him would suffer. Well, no word was ever heard from him again. Both the yacht and he vanished utterly. We believed, my mother and I The nocturnal visitor was a young that he and it, with the securities that man, frail and thin, with a black mus- he had taken with him, were at the tache, which intensified the deadly bottom of the sea. We had a faithful

tention of seeing the captain, but it "Now, my fine fellow," said Stanley was at this moment that his terrible a description of his cable, in which it The man pulled himself together and stated that the old logbooks of his vesfaced us with an effort at self compo- sel were preserved in it. It struck me that if I could see what occurred in the to get at these logbooks, but was unapages which deal with that month have been torn from the book. It was at that moment I found myself a prisoner in your hands."

"Is that all?" asked Hopkins. "Yes, that is all." His eyes shifted as he said it.

"You have nothing else to tell us?" He hesitated. "No, there is nothing."

"You have not been here before last night?" "No." "Then how do you account for that?"

cried Hopkins, as he held up the damning notebook, with the initials of our prisoner on the first leaf and the blood stain on the cover. The wretched man collapsed. He

sank his face in his bands and trembled all over. "Where did you get it?" he groaned. I did not know. I thought I had lost

it at the hotel," "That is enough," said Hopkins sternly. "Whatever else you have to say, you must say in court. You will walk down with me now to the police station. Well, Mr. Holmes, I am very much obliged to you and to your friend for coming down to help me. As it turns out, your presence was unnecsary, and I would have brought the case to this successful issue without you; but, none the less, I am grateful. Rooms have been reserved for you at the Brambletye hotel, so we can all

walk down to the village together." "Well, Watson, what do you think of it?" asked Holmes as we traveled back next morning.

"I can see that you are not satis-

tied. "Oh, yes, my dear Watson; I am perfectly satisfied. At the same time, Stanley Hopkins' methods do not commend themselves to me. I am disappointed in Stauley Hopkins. I had hoped for better things from him. One should always look for a possible alternative and provide against it. It is the first rule of criminal investiga-

"What, then, is the alternative?" "The line of investigation which I have myself been pursuing. It may give us nothing. I cannot tell. But at least I shall follow it to the end."

Several letters were walting for "Why should I not? And yet I hate to Holmes at Baker street. He snatched one of them up, opened it and burst out into a triumphant chuckle of laugh-

"Excellent, Watson! The alternative develops. Have you telegraph forms? Just write a couple of messages for me: 'Sumner, shipping agent, Ratcliff' highway. Send three men on to arrive 10 tomorrow morning. Basil.' That's my name in those parts. The other is: street, Brixton. Come breakfast tomorrow at 9:30. Important, Wire if unable to come. Sherlock Holmes. There, Watson, this infernal case has haunted me for ten days. I hereby banish it completely from my presence. Tomorrow I trust that we shall hear

concerned. Dawson had retired. I the last of it forever." ·Sharp at the hour named Inspector Stanley Hopkins appeared, and we sat down together to the excellent break-

its at his success. "You really think that your solution must be correct?" asked Holmes. "I could not imagine a more complete

"It did not seem to me conclusive." "You astonish me. Mr. Holmes. What more could one ask for?" "Does your explanation cover every

point?" "Undoubtedly, I find that young Nellgan arrived at the Brambletve hotel on the very day of the crime. He came on the pretense of playing golf. His room was on the ground floor, and he could get out when he liked. That very night he went down to Woodman's Lee, saw Peter Carey at the but, quarreled with him, and killed him with the harpoon. Then, horrified by what he had done,